

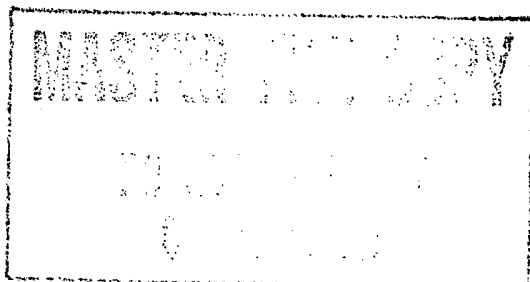
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Terrorist Arms Procurement: Countering a Growing Threat

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An Intelligence Assessment

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Terrorist Arms Procurement: Countering a Growing Threat

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted] Office
of Global Issues. Comments and queries are welcome
and may be directed to the Chief, International
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**Terrorist Arms Procurement:
Countering a Growing Threat**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 25 February 1986
was used in this report.*

Examination of recovered terrorist weapons in the Middle East, Latin America, and Western Europe suggests that the quantity and quality of weapons available to terrorists are increasing. The existence of four separate arms procurement channels ensures that terrorists will be able to acquire the weapons necessary to conduct a wide variety of attacks on US personnel and installations. Weapons already available to terrorist groups through these channels range from semiautomatic and fully automatic small arms to man-portable, antitank and antiaircraft weapons.

Our analysis of recovered weapons indicates that terrorists obtain their arms from one or more of the following sources, each of which presents a different set of problems and opportunities for control:

- Nations that support terrorism as extensions of their foreign policies are a direct source of some of the most lethal ordnance available to terrorists today. Patron-state supporters include Libya, Iran, and Syria, which purchase prodigious quantities of Western and Bloc weapons and provide some of this ordnance to various terrorist organizations—primarily in the Middle East. Similarly, the Soviet Union and its East European allies supply a wide variety of arms directly to various Palestinian groups, and some of these arms are used in terrorist attacks. In the Western Hemisphere, Cuba and Nicaragua appear to provide small arms and other ordnance to a variety of leftist subversive groups in Latin America that use terrorist tactics.

Absent the ability to compel the Soviets and their allies to halt arms shipments to the Palestinians or patron-state supporters of terrorism, an agreement among Western arms manufacturers to limit or prohibit the sale of small arms and other infantry weapons to nations like Libya and Iran would reduce the number and types of ordnance available to their terrorist clients.

- Private arms dealers and brokers who buy and sell weapons on the international gray arms market facilitate the flow of weapons from major arms manufacturers to terrorist groups. Because their transactions are seldom subject to control or verification, gray-market arms dealers are also employed by Libya and other nations seeking “deniable” weapons for issuance to their own terrorist operatives, and by East European nations seeking to distance themselves from the ultimate end users of the weapons they buy and sell.

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Aggressive multilateral police cooperation against these private dealers may drive some out of business and force others to curtail or end their illicit sales. Alternatively, private brokers buy large quantities of surplus weapons from foreign governments for resale on the gray market, and denying them access to at least the most dangerous surplus equipment would reduce the availability of such ordnance to terrorists.

- Some terrorist groups—such as the various Palestinian organizations—exchange weapons in return for logistic and operational support and are an important source of the most lethal ordnance used by West European terrorists.

Better trained and equipped foreign customs and border control officials may help impede the movement of terrorist weapons across international boundaries. Increased intelligence sharing among nations concerned with combating terrorism and the establishment of a collection and records system designed to ensure complete, accurate, and consistent identification data on recovered terrorist weapons would also aid in tracking the movement of ordnance.

- Local theft or commercial purchase appears to be the major source of weapons for non-Middle Eastern terrorists. Examination of weapons recovered from major West European terrorist organizations indicates that, although small quantities of Bloc ordnance are almost invariably present, the majority of captured weapons are either Western small arms stolen from police and military installations or civilian firearms stolen or even purchased from commercial gunshops. Similarly, because of the ready availability of commercial US weapons, a large percentage of the firearms captured recently from subversive groups in Colombia can be traced to gunshops in Florida.

Increased intelligence and international cooperation in identifying and tracing recovered commercial Western weapons could help identify those purchasers that either divert arms to terrorists or fail to ensure reasonable security for the weapons they import.

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We believe that all of these measures, taken together, would at best only reduce terrorist access to weapons. None of these actions will have a major impact as long as the USSR and other Communist states continue to buy and sell weapons ideal for terrorist use on the gray market, and provide weapons directly to Palestinian or other groups that use terrorist tactics. Moreover, Middle Eastern patron states will remain willing to supply arms to their terrorist clients as long as the cost to each state's own interests remains low.

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Scope Note

This assessment examines the major sources of terrorist small arms. Although different sources claim various origins for many of the weapons used by terrorist groups, these reports are often unconfirmable and sometimes contradictory. This study is based primarily on our examination and analysis of thousands of rounds of ammunition, and hundreds of handguns, submachineguns, assault rifles, and other infantry weapons actually recovered from terrorists in Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America. Most of this ordnance [redacted]

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[redacted] is often the only physical evidence remaining at the scene of a terrorist attack. If properly exploited, such weapons can reveal a great deal about not only the types of arms available to terrorists but also the sources of these weapons. Although explosives are used in many terrorist actions, sources of terrorist explosives will not be analyzed in this paper. Future assessments are planned to address this topic. [redacted]

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Terrorist Arms Procurement: Countering a Growing Threat

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Introduction

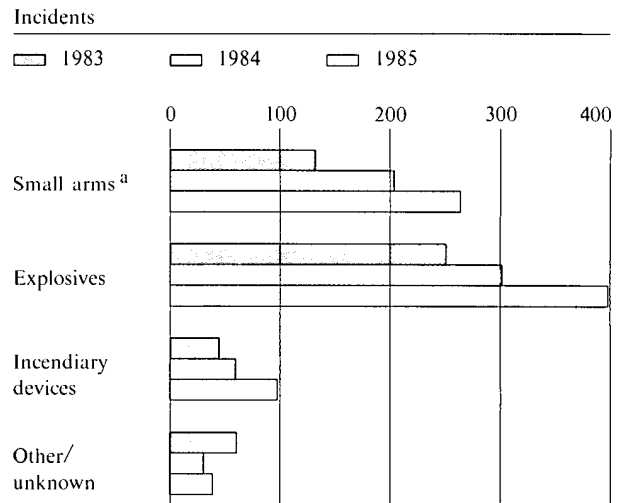
Terrorism by definition involves the use or threatened use of violence against civilian or noncombatant targets for political ends. Terrorist operations, therefore, always presuppose the availability of weapons. This Intelligence Assessment examines the four major sources of terrorist weapons: provision by patron states, the international gray arms market, logistic cooperation among terrorist groups, and local theft and commercial purchase. Because of continuing gaps in evidence, this paper is illustrative rather than exhaustive, and provides an overview of the most important terrorist arms procurement channels and the types of ordnance available through them.

The Weapons of Terrorism

Our investigations indicate that a large variety of weapons have been used in the commission of international terrorist acts in recent years (see figure 1). Although bombs or other explosive devices have been the most common weapon of the terrorist for many years, the percentage of terrorist attacks involving small arms has increased significantly since 1983. For example:

- Assault rifles were used by radical Shia terrorists while kidnaping nearly all of their many victims in Lebanon in 1984 and 1985.
- Handguns and grenades have provided skyjackers with their lethal firepower in all 25 takeovers of commercial airliners in the last three years.
- Several of the most serious recent incidents involving mass casualties were the result of terrorists spraying crowded areas with automatic weapons fire and grenades—in front of the Libyan Embassy in London, in a Jerusalem shopping mall in 1984, in a restaurant in El Salvador, and in airport terminals in Rome and Vienna in 1985, for example.

Figure 1
Weapons of International Terrorism



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^a Includes firearms, grenades, and rocket projectiles.

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- The rash of assassination attacks carried out by terrorists in the Middle East and Europe in the last two years all involved small arms.
- Rocket launchers designed for battlefield use by infantry allowed terrorists to conduct standoff attacks on embassies, government or airline offices, and civilian aircraft in several geographic regions.

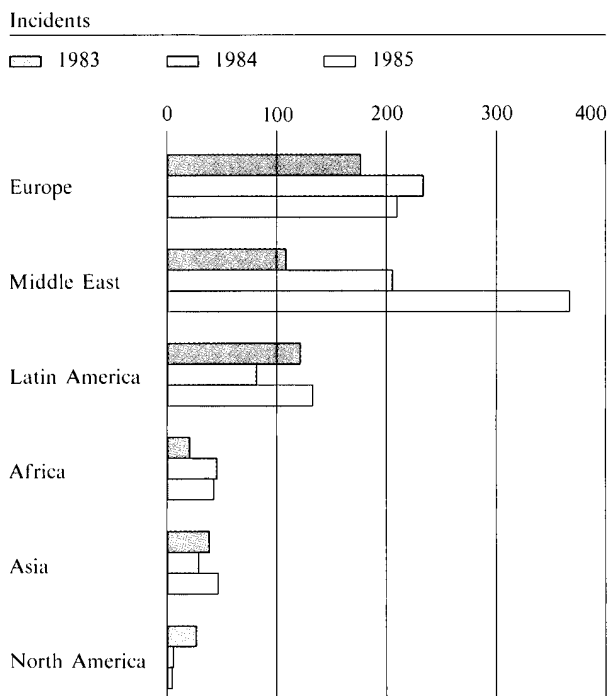
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Terrorists in the Middle East, Western Europe, and Latin America in particular are using small arms with increasing frequency (see figure 2). These terrorists are:

- Palestinian groups attacking primarily Israeli or moderate Arab targets.

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Figure 2
Regional Location of International
Terrorist Attacks Using Small Arms^a



^a Includes firearms, grenades, and rocket projectiles.

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- Islamic fundamentalists striking at US or other Western personnel.
- Libyan state agents out to eliminate anti-Qadhafi exiles and other opponents of Tripoli.
- West European separatist and extreme leftist groups targeting individuals representing the authority of their respective governments.
- Insurgent groups in Latin America employing terrorist tactics as part of their campaign to achieve power.

All of these terrorist elements must obtain weapons to be successful and, not surprisingly, our investigations indicate that they have found many different arms sources.

Patron-State Suppliers

Established governments purchase prodigious quantities of small arms and ammunition through conventional, although often secretive, government-to-government channels. Many arms exporting countries require end user certificates from their customers, and some even require formal permission from the supplier for third-party transfers. None of these requirements, however, has stopped recipient states wishing to pass some of their small arms to terrorist groups. Such ordnance is easy to move and conceal in the small quantities usually required at any one time, and sanitization of factory markings or serial numbers can help complicate or prevent any definitive trace of captured weapons back to their source. Moreover, most small arms are very durable, and many years may pass between their sale to a legitimate government and their ultimate passage to a terrorist or insurgent group. A patron state can claim, for example, that its older, obsolete weapons were sold as surplus to private dealers or that they were lost or stolen years before they were discovered in the possession of terrorists.

On the basis of our examination of captured weapons, we believe that terrorists obtain both the most sophisticated and the largest variety of weapons in their inventory from patron states. While most weapons employed by non-Middle Eastern terrorists were probably stolen or obtained on the international gray arms market, patron states are the most dangerous source of terrorist weapons in the Middle East. Many of the man-portable, antitank and anti-aircraft weapons recently used by terrorists have come from state supporters, for example. Established governments like Libya, Syria, and Iran probably are the most prolific direct suppliers to groups that commit terrorist acts. Other nations—such as Cuba and Nicaragua—also provide materiel support to a variety of leftist subversive groups.

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USSR and Eastern Europe

Our analysis of terrorist arms procurement patterns indicates that, although the Soviet Union and its East European allies supply arms directly only to Palestinian terrorist groups, Bloc small arms are often found in the hands of West European and other Third

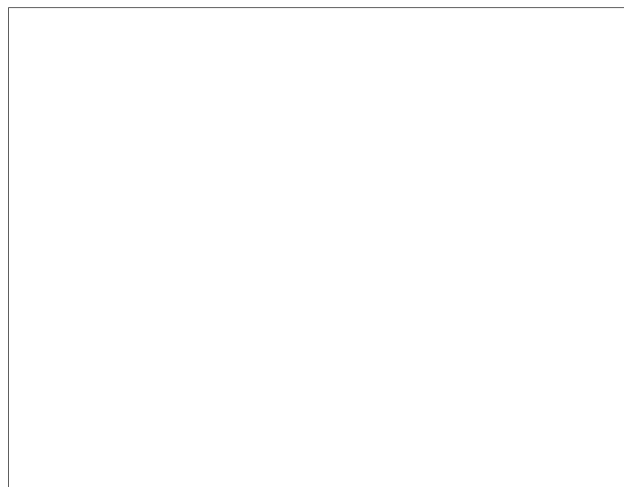
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World terrorists. The availability of Soviet-style ordnance largely results from Bloc willingness to supply prodigious quantities of weapons to states, such as Libya and Syria, that do supply terrorists directly, various Palestinian terrorist groups, and private arms dealers on the international gray arms market. Arms sales to these recipients, in our judgment, are made with the full knowledge that much of this ordnance is resold, traded, or given to third parties—such as non-Palestinian and West European terrorist organizations. [redacted]

The willingness of Bloc arms clients to retransfer weapons obviates the need for the Soviet Union and East European countries to risk international disapproval by directly arming non-Palestinian terrorist groups. Arms sales agreements of the USSR and its East European allies appear to require a recipient to seek permission before retransferring weapons, but, to our knowledge, such third-party transfer restrictions have never been applied to small arms. Moreover, the Soviets themselves have admitted the widespread availability of their weapons. During a 1981 interview with a Dublin newspaper, for example, the Soviet Ambassador to Ireland was asked if Moscow had supplied the Provisional Irish Republican Army with weapons. He replied, "To my knowledge, there is absolutely no ground for such allegations . . . we cannot exclude the possibility that actions can be taken with Soviet-made weapons—this does not mean that they have been supplied by us. The weapons can be got in many different regions. It is not a problem." [redacted]

In addition to supplying weapons to governments that support terrorism and private arms dealers, Moscow and its allies have provided arms to Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and other Palestinian groups within the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Small arms, grenades, Katyusha rocket launchers, artillery, and even tanks from the Eastern Bloc have been provided in the past and have helped arm the thousands of Palestinian fighters scattered throughout the Arab world in small military or guerrilla units. [redacted]

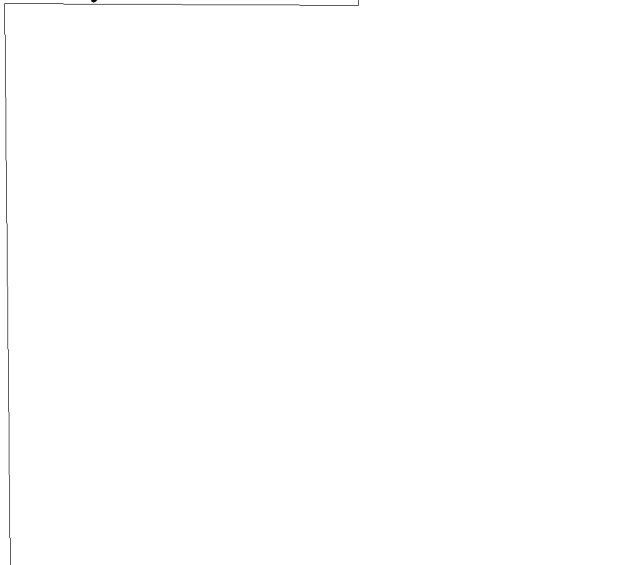


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Although the majority of these weapons have never been used in terrorist acts, some of these arms—particularly the man-portable infantry weapons—are used by Palestinian terrorists. [redacted]



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Other types of Bloc ordnance that frequently turn up in the possession of Palestinian and other terrorist groups include:

- Czechoslovak 7.65-mm M61 Skorpion submachineguns.
- Czechoslovak 7.65-mm Cz-70 and 9-mm Cz-75 pistols.
- Polish 9-mm Wz-63 submachineguns.

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use. These include a variety of counterfeit, sterile, or silenced small arms—many of which have already turned up in the possession of terrorists:

- A variety of Soviet-style Kalashnikov assault rifles made in virtually every Bloc country.
- Bulgarian, Polish, Romanian, and Soviet RPG-7 antitank weapons.

Although Palestinian terrorists—and other groups they sometimes support—have used Bloc ordnance in many of the most infamous terrorist attacks, there is no evidence that either the USSR or its East European allies have ever suspended their arms supply relationships with Palestinian groups as a result.

Although available evidence does not indicate that Moscow or its allies provide weapons to Palestinians for use in specific terrorist actions, fragmentary evidence suggests that the USSR and some East European nations manufacture and distribute certain weapons more suited to terrorist—as opposed to military—

- Czechoslovakia manufactures silencers suitable for use with various small-caliber pistols. These silencers are commercially available

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The International Gray Arms Market

Private arms dealers and brokers purchase large quantities of weapons from both Communist and Western sources for resale to governmental and non-governmental customers. Although the volume and value of such sales are small compared with official government-to-government arms deliveries, arms sales on this gray market pose a danger far in excess of their size. In contrast to most official arms transactions—where at least nominal control is maintained over the final disposition of the weapons involved—the ultimate recipient of a gray-market arms sale is seldom known. This lack of accountability is further compounded by the durability of modern small arms, which allows them to be bought and sold many times and makes tracing their origins very difficult.

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<p>These factors make the gray arms market ideal for terrorist groups or states seeking weapons for their own use, and for nations seeking to distance themselves from the ultimate end users of the weapons they supply. Moreover, the opportunities for highly profitable clandestine and illegal arms trading by private dealers are substantial because of the difficulty Western governments face in monitoring thousands of small transactions. <input data-bbox="324 1543 500 1579" type="text"/></p>	

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Communist Acquisition of Western Weapons

In addition to serving as a source of weapons for state supporters of terrorist groups, private arms dealers serve as middlemen for various Bloc governments that buy and resell Western weapons that end up in terrorist hands. Such arms are incompatible with those in use by Bloc military and security forces, and our analysis of recovered terrorist firearms indicates that many of the Western weapons captured from a variety of terrorists were originally purchased by East European nations on the gray arms market. Buying and selling hard-to-trace weapons of Western—rather than Bloc—origin via gray-market “cutouts” allows Bloc governments to distance themselves from both the weapons and their ultimate recipients. This practice enables Bloc governments to earn badly needed hard Western currency while maintaining an element of deniability should any of these arms be recovered at the scene of politically sensitive terrorist attacks.

Bulgaria. Before 1983, Bulgaria purchased large quantities of weapons directly from Western governments and manufacturers via Kintex, the Bulgarian state-controlled military trade organization. We estimate that Kintex purchased at least 100,000 civilian small arms from Western manufacturers in the late 1970s.² All of these weapons fire Western-(rather than Bloc-) caliber ammunition and were almost certainly destined for resale.

² Although high, this figure may not accurately reflect Bulgaria's success in acquiring European weapons. This is due, in part, to COCOM regulations, which do not require special approval for the export of handguns firing nonmilitary cartridges. Hence, it is impossible to gauge the sales volume of European .380-, .32-, .25-, and .22-caliber pistols to proscribed countries.

Bulgaria appears to have made its last direct purchases of Western small arms in late 1982 and early 1983 when Kintex bought 6,000 9-mm PT-92 pistols and a similar quantity of 9-mm MT-12 submachine-guns from Taurus of Brazil. Since then, Kintex has acquired Western small arms via a circuitous network of Western private arms dealers and other non-Bulgarian foreign trade firms.

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The types and quantities of ordnance suggest that Poland intended to transship or resell these weapons—which are not compatible with those used within the Bloc—to another gray market customer. [redacted]

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Cuba. Circumstantial evidence suggests that Cuba also has procured modern, Western weapons on the gray arms market for passage to insurgent or terrorist groups in Latin America. [redacted]

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[redacted] a separate Panamanian investigation into the case suggested that the captured arms were part of a larger consignment of 475 submachineguns probably destined for M-19 guerrillas in Colombia. Two subsequent seizures by Colombian forces of 77 additional MP5A3 submachineguns—with identical markings—in late 1985 and early 1986 tend to confirm the Panamanian suspicion that the weapons captured earlier in Costa Rica were only part of a larger shipment bound for subversives in Colombia.

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Poland. In addition to its probable involvement in the procurement of Western pistols cited above, Poland was recently involved in an unsuccessful attempt to acquire US and other Western assault rifles on the gray arms market. In February 1984 US Customs agents seized 500 US Ruger AC-556 automatic assault rifles and 100,000 rounds of US 5.56-mm ammunition that were about to be loaded aboard a chartered aircraft at JFK International Airport. A US Customs Service investigation indicates that the weapons—procured by two individuals in New York and ostensibly destined for Mexico—were to be flown from New York to Europe. After picking up an additional 1,000 West German Heckler & Koch rifles in London and 75 boxes of ammunition and 33 boxes of pistols in Brussels, the pilot reportedly was to declare an inflight emergency and land in Warsaw.

[redacted]

Nicaragua. Some reporting suggests that Managua—like Havana—may also seek modern, untraceable weapons via the international gray arms market. [redacted]

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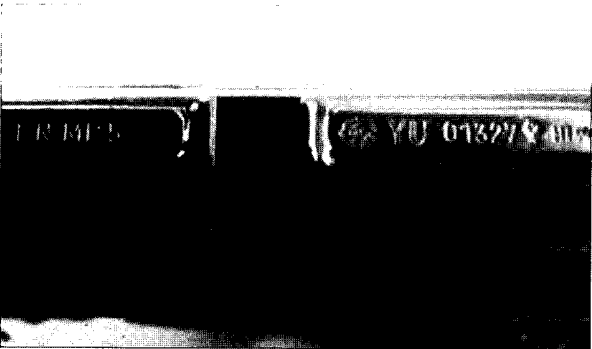
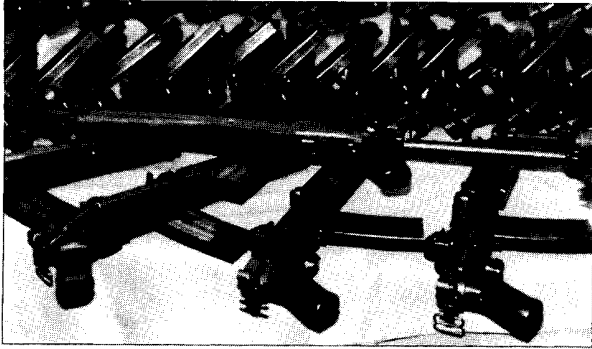


Figure 14. US Ruger assault rifles seized by US Customs Service agents en route to Poland in 1984 (top). Markings on MP5A3 submachineguns captured in Colombia and Costa Rica in 1985 indicate that weapons were manufactured for Yugoslavia under West German license by the Royal Small Arms Arsenal at Enfield, England (bottom).

and assault rifles of proven Soviet design. East European gray-market arms sales also include Bloc-manufactured weapons that fire Western-caliber ammunition, which is readily available throughout Europe and the Third World (see table).

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In addition to small arms, East European nations sell more sophisticated ordnance on the gray arms market.

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East European Weapons on the Gray Arms Market

Most East European countries sell large quantities of ordnance to private dealers and brokers in the West through state-controlled foreign trade organizations. Because of the absence of effective end user controls, some of this ordnance almost certainly is acquired by terrorist or insurgent groups. The illegal nature of some of this trade indicates an East European interest in providing weapons to politically sensitive customers while maintaining an element of deniability.

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the majority of East European gray-market arms transactions involve conventional pistols, submachineguns,

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East European Small Arms Available for Sale to Gray-Market Arms Dealers

Weapon	Caliber	Price ^b (US \$)	Country
Handguns			
Duo	6.35 mm ^a	60 ^b	Czechoslovakia
Cz-70	7.65 mm ^a	120	Czechoslovakia
Cz-83	7.65 mm ^a and .380 ACP ^a	140	Czechoslovakia
Self-defense pocket pistol	7.65 mm ^a	120 ^b	Hungary
AP/APK	7.65 mm ^a	150 ^b	Hungary
AP9/APK9	.380 ACP ^a	150 ^b	Hungary
FP9/P9R/P9RA	9 mm Parabellum ^a	240 ^b	Hungary
Cz-75	9 mm Parabellum ^a	240	Czechoslovakia
P-64	9 mm Makarov	150 ^b	Poland ^d
Submachineguns			
Skorpion	7.65 mm ^a , .380 ACP, ^a 9 mm Parabellum, ^a 9 mm Makarov	260 ^b	Czechoslovakia ^c
Wz-63	9 mm Makarov	280 ^b	Poland ^d
Assault rifles			
Vz-58	7.62 x 39 mm	240	Czechoslovakia
AK-47/AKM variants	7.62 x 39 mm	240	Poland, Romania, East Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria ^d
M70B1/M70AB2	5.56 mm ^a	240 ^b	Yugoslavia
Sniper rifles			
FPK	7.62 x 54R mm	900 ^b	Romania

^a Western calibers.^b Estimated price.^c Also made in Yugoslavia.^d Also made in China.

The Exchange of Weapons Between Terrorist Groups

Fragmentary evidence indicates that terrorist groups sometimes supply arms to each other. We believe they do so either in return for logistic and operational support or simply as an expression of solidarity. On some occasions, arms aid may be an attempt by the donor to influence future targets of the recipient, or to buy cooperation in countries where the donor cannot safely or inconspicuously operate. Although we believe that most terrorists obtain the majority of their

weapons through other channels, the exchange of ordnance between terrorist groups appears to be the source of many of the most effective and lethal arms found in the possession of terrorists in Western Europe. [REDACTED]

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opposed to military, firearms. Although firm statistics on terrorist weapons sources are not available because of the fragmentary nature of the evidence, we suspect that, except in the Middle East, terrorist groups procure most of their weapons from local sources. Only a small quantity of arms and ammunition must be stolen for a terrorist group to conduct armed attacks, kidnappings, or other violent actions, and autonomous procurement protects a group from dependence on, or penetration by, outsiders. Moreover, weapons-grabbing operations help groups train and test the loyalty of their members.

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Theft and Local Purchase

Many of the weapons captured from West European terrorist groups and Third World insurgents that use terrorist tactics were procured locally through theft or purchase. Many of these weapons are civilian, as

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Illicit US Commercial Firearms in Colombia

The United States is one of the world's leading firearms manufacturers, and, as a result, commercially available US weapons frequently turn up in the possession of terrorist and insurgent groups around the world. Although the quantities of US weapons reaching West European and Middle Eastern terrorists do not seem inordinantly large in relation to non-US arms, this is not the case in at least some parts of Latin America where US-origin commercial firearms

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constitute a large portion of subversive arsenals.

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More Arms

The production of new arms by many suppliers, a probable increase in the number of surplus or older military weapons available on the market, and the continued delivery of large quantities of weapons to patron states will ensure a large pool of firepower from which terrorists can draw. Small arms and ammunition are already produced in substantial quantity by firms in nearly every industrialized Western and Communist nation. Growing numbers of Third World nations are also producing small arms, ammunition, grenades, and even heavy infantry weapons—often under license from a major industrial Western nation. Countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Singapore are aggressively developing indigenous small arms industries, and [REDACTED]

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China and North Korea have become more interested recently in selling small arms on the international commercial and gray arms markets. We believe that a growing number of suppliers will offer more arms to an international market characterized by stable governmental demand and increasing financial constraints. The resulting intense competition to maintain domestic arms industries may lead some suppliers to sell arms cheaply with no questions asked. [REDACTED]

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Outlook

We believe that, for the foreseeable future, most terrorist groups will be able to obtain the weapons necessary to conduct a wide range of attacks. After their arsenals have been temporarily depleted by successful counterterrorist operations in the past, most major terrorist groups have been able to make good their materiel losses largely because of the multiplicity of available arms sources. Small arms—handguns, submachineguns, and semiautomatic and fully automatic rifles—will always be obtainable on the international gray arms market or through theft or commercial purchase, particularly in the relatively small quantities needed by terrorists. Only West European terrorists may face more serious periodic arms shortages because of the relatively more effective local regulations and the efficiency of security forces in that region. We are concerned, however, that the quantity and quality of weapons available to terrorists in general will increase in the next few years. [REDACTED]

We anticipate most Third World military establishments will adopt Western 5.56-mm subcaliber, hypervelocity assault rifles—such as the US M16 or Israeli Galil—in the next five to 10 years, and large quantities of older 7.62 x 51-mm rifles—such as the Belgian FAL or West German G3—will become surplus as a result. Many of these weapons—which are still perfectly serviceable—will be sold to private arms dealers and could become accessible to terrorists via the gray arms market. Some may be given to foreign dissident or insurgent groups that various Third World nations support. [REDACTED]

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Similarly, as the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies rearm their forces with variants of the 5.45-mm PSM pistol and AK-74 assault rifle, we expect even larger quantities of older Bloc 9-mm Makarov pistols and 7.62 x 39-mm AK-47/AKM rifles to be sold or given to Soviet-client states, which, in turn, may provide them to insurgents or terrorists. Alternatively,

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Bloc nations could sell some of these older weapons to gray-market dealers, or provide them to Palestinian or other foreign insurgent and terrorist groups directly. The same is true for Bloc RPG-7 antitank and SA-7 antiaircraft weapons—both of which are currently being replaced in Soviet and Warsaw Pact forces.

The prodigious quantities of US ordnance that fell into Hanoi's possession after the collapse of the Republic of South Vietnam in April 1975 also guarantees Moscow and its Bloc allies a nearly inexhaustible supply of "deniable" US weapons suited for terrorist and insurgent use. US weapons abandoned in Vietnam and Cambodia include an estimated:

- 946,000 M16A1 assault rifles.
- 961,000 other rifles.
- 114,000 M1911A1 pistols.
- 65,500 M79 grenade launchers.
- 63,000 M72 Light Antitank Weapons.
- 15,320 M60 GMPG machineguns.
- 150,000 tons of various caliber ammunition.

These weapons will no doubt continue to turn up in the possession of leftist subversives not only in Latin America but also throughout the world for many years to come.

We believe that Libya, Iran, and Syria will continue to purchase large quantities of weapons that their terrorist clients otherwise might have difficulty procuring. Kalashnikov assault rifles, SA-7s, RPG-7s, RPG-18s, and Katyusha rocket launchers almost certainly will remain standard weapons in the arsenals of Middle Eastern terrorists and other potential terrorists as well.

More Lethal Weapons

As new firearms are developed, terrorist arsenals will not only be easily replenished but also may gain increasingly sophisticated and lethal small arms and accessories. Recent advances in firearms technology, for example, have resulted in:

- New types of special-purpose ammunition—such as the French-made THV round that combines the previously irreconcilable properties of massive tissue damage and the ability to penetrate hardened targets. Similarly, subsonic ammunition—suitable for use in silenced or suppressed weapons—is commercially available in many parts of the world.
- Increasingly sophisticated night vision and laser sighting devices that enable a shooter to reliably engage his victim in low-light conditions and that facilitate rapid, accurate target acquisition.
- A new generation of small arms containing few metal parts that would be easier to smuggle through airport or border security systems than all-metal weapons. Such weapons include the Austrian Glock pistol and AUG assault rifle—both largely constructed of high-impact plastic and commercially available. Similarly, a West German firm is developing caseless ammunition that does not incorporate a metallic cartridge.

We do not believe that recent enhanced security measures at US diplomatic installations abroad will compel terrorists to abandon the small arms presently available to them and seek new state-of-the-art conventional weapons—such as hypervelocity missiles with kinetic-energy warheads or "smart" munitions—in order to attack hardened US targets. Rather than changing their ordnance, experience has shown that terrorists will alter their choice of tactics or targets. Thus, if security measures at an embassy preclude an attack on a US ambassador or other high-ranking official, terrorists will either target these individuals at "softer" locations—such as their home or vehicle—or attack lower-ranked, more accessible embassy personnel.

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Although we cannot preclude the possibility that a particular terrorist organization might obtain a state-of-the-art weapon either through theft or from a patron-state supporter, the lack of training and the degree of technical expertise required to maintain and operate advanced weapon systems suggest that terrorists, in general, will continue to rely on those weapons already in their inventories—augmented, perhaps, by special-purpose ammunition and target acquisition devices. []

Exploiting Vulnerabilities of Terrorist Arms Procurement Channels

Given the many avenues terrorists have for acquiring weapons, any effort to stem the arms flow will be limited in its impact. Nonetheless, our analysis suggests that there are potential vulnerabilities in each of the four main procurement channels. []

A multilateral agreement not to sell small arms and other infantry weapons suitable for terrorist use to patron-state or gray-market suppliers of terrorists would complicate terrorist acquisition of some types of ordnance. This would be particularly true if such an embargo were enforced by a mutual agreement to ban imports from those nations that refuse to limit arms sales to unacceptable clients. []

The effectiveness of such an approach would be limited, in our view, by the almost certain refusal of the Soviets and their allies to participate and by the reluctance of both West European and Third World nations to jeopardize the health of their small arms industries. Nevertheless, at least some of these nations might be willing to impose embargoes or enforce end user controls in some cases if they feared the loss of US weapons technology for their own arms industries, the potential loss of import licenses in the lucrative US civilian small-arms market, or ineligibility to compete for official US military contracts. []

Gray-market arms dealers who directly or indirectly supply weapons to terrorist groups or patron-state supporters of terrorism are sometimes vulnerable to cooperative counterterrorist or police action by the United States and its allies. No government—either

in the West or in the Bloc—is likely to make any overt move to protect an individual whose activities are, at best, marginally legal. Possible operations against such individuals could include:

- Monitoring their activities to develop advance warning of an arms transfer to terrorists.
- Alerting foreign police or security officials of impending illicit arms shipments through their territory.
- Inerting and/or tracking suspicious arms shipments with electronic beacons.
- Compromising the dealers with their clients and/or suppliers.
- Publicly exposing the dealers' activities. []

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International cooperation in purchasing and destroying surplus weapons could reduce a potential source of terrorist weapons. Although such purchases would partially subsidize a foreign nation's rearmament program, they would keep large quantities of older, serviceable small-arms and other infantry weapons out of the hands of disreputable gray-market dealers. Depending on the country involved, surplus weapons could be purchased directly by the United States or its allies, or indirectly by private intermediaries. Alternatively, the United States and other major small-arms exporters could subsidize their own weapons manufacturers who accept a recipient nation's surplus arms as partial payment for newer ordnance. []

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Weapons passed between terrorist groups are often carried or shipped over international borders where they are subject to inspection and discovery. Increasing the level of training and the provision of modern detection equipment to foreign customs and border control officials could limit the cross-border movement of terrorist weapons. Of equal importance is training to help foreign security officials identify stolen or forged identity documents or to spot individual behavior indicative of a terrorist. The ability to identify a terrorist—rather than his weapons—will become increasingly important if, as we suspect, some terrorist groups already have caches of arms prepositioned in various countries for contingency use. []

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Weapons are often the only hard physical evidence remaining at the scene of a terrorist attack or captured in a terrorist arms cache, and they are an invaluable source of counterterrorist intelligence—provided their potential is properly exploited. Analysis of expended cartridge cases and recovered bullets, for example, can reveal both the origin and age of the ammunition used in an attack as well as the type of weapon from which it was fired. A comparison of this information with the modus operandi of known terrorist organizations could help eliminate many of the groups that falsely claim “credit” for a particular action, or, conversely, identify the guilty party when no claims are forthcoming. Similarly, detailed reporting of captured terrorist ordnance can reveal the types and quantities of weapons available to a particular group and provide insights into the likely origins of the arms. Increased intelligence sharing among nations concerned with combating terrorism and the establishment of a collection and records system designed to ensure complete, accurate, and consistent identification data on recovered terrorist weapons would be a major step in better understanding the types, origins, and use of terrorist weapons. Similarly, improving and speeding up access to information on US-origin weapons captured from terrorists abroad could help identify those foreign countries or firms that either divert US weapons to terrorists or fail to adequately safeguard the US weapons they acquire.

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